

1 E-V-E-N-I-N-G S-E-S-S-I-O-N

2 (7:03 p.m.)

3 CHAIRMAN JAMES: It's my pleasure to
4 reconvene this meeting of the National Gambling Impact
5 Study Commission and to begin the public comment
6 period of our site visit.

7 We are most anxious to hear from the
8 residents of this community and are appreciative of
9 your willingness to come out here on a very cold, at
10 least for this Southern girl, January evening to share
11 your perspective on the impact of legalized gambling
12 on this community.

13 We've had a very full day and are grateful
14 to your mayor and to the staff of the Rescue Mission
15 and everyone who assisted in making our afternoon so
16 productive.

17 It was informative to see the city and to
18 learn first hand about the changes and accomplishments
19 that have been made in the past 20 years.

20 As was discussed earlier in the day,
21 several individuals scheduled to speak have requested
22 anonymity for personal reasons. They are prepared to

1 testify before the Commission, but have asked that
2 their names not be used in the transcript or related
3 news stories and that photographs and video recordings
4 not be taken while they are speaking.

5 These individuals have a compelling story
6 to tell, and it's important as we deliberate about
7 such significant issues that we hear as many
8 perspectives as possible.

9 For this reason, the Commission has worked
10 hard to come up with a process that would accommodate
11 their request. However, the Commissioners feel
12 strongly and equally committed to conducting itself in
13 an open manner and to insure that everyone has the
14 benefit of the information we receive. To exclude the
15 public and the press would be counterproductive
16 because their role in this process is as critical as
17 those who come before us as witnesses.

18 Those who requested anonymity are not
19 seeking secrecy. In fact, to the contrary, they are
20 willing to come here to night to share their very
21 personal information about the impact of gambling in
22 their own lives. Nevertheless, they do seek privacy,

1 particularly in their home town.

2 While this is a public and an open
3 meeting, we will strive to accommodate these requests.
4 For this reason, members of the press are respectfully
5 asked to honor the request for anonymity by these
6 speakers.

7 I will notify the public and the press
8 which of the speakers has requested anonymity. For
9 reference, the individuals on the roster of speakers
10 who are only listed by their first names are those
11 individuals seeking anonymity.

12 I want to remind all of our speakers that
13 remarks are limited to three minutes. If you have a
14 written statement, you may submit that for the record
15 and summarize your comments this evening.

16 The staff will notify you at the end of
17 your time limit, and a light and, indeed, a buzzer
18 will indicate the time remaining and when to stop.

19 In all seriousness, in fairness to all of
20 our speakers, I would ask that those testifying limit
21 their remarks to the allotted time, and I would ask of
22 the audience to please refrain from applause and any

1 unnecessary noise.

2 We want to hear from as many individuals
3 as possible, and I really do ask your cooperation in
4 that effort.

5 I want to again express the appreciation
6 of this Commission to all of you for coming here
7 tonight. We will spend a lot of time hearing from the
8 experts, but your perspective is as important to our
9 work as anything else that we'll hear while here.

10 We're not here to tell the residents of
11 Atlantic City anything about their experience with
12 legalized gambling. As I said earlier, we are here to
13 listen to you.

14 Please know that your comments, both
15 written and oral will be a part of our deliberations
16 and given the consideration that they merit.

17 Thank you very much for your cooperation
18 and understanding, and with that we will begin our
19 public comment period, and I would ask your indulgence
20 with names. If I get it incorrectly, please don't
21 hesitate to correct it for the record.

22 Our first speaker, Kasine Bey.